

FOLKWAYS

due to the peace pact, valid over a continent, with immunity from powerful neighbors. We now think that we will renounce all this and go out after world power and glory so as to be like the other nations.

550. The instability of great peace unions. Now that we have the laws of Hammurabi we can see that the Euphrates valley was organized into a peace unit with a very complete and highly finished peace pact twenty-five hundred years before Christ. All the ordinary cases of discord and diverse interest were provided for under an elaborate system of laws as good as that of a modern European state. The later states of western Asia were involved in war by conflicting interests, ambition, and jealousy until the time of Alexander the Great. The smaller states were at last all submerged in the Roman empire. All the constructive work has been overthrown again and again. Only within a century or two has a structure been set up which has more stability, but it is all in jeopardy now. A union of the existing groups could not be brought about but by conquest, and that would mean very great wars, yet all are ready, by virtue of their institutions and ideas, to merge in a confederation in which peace would reign and incalculable blessings would result.

551. The Arabs. The Arabs in the time of Mohammed were a nation inhabiting a territory which kept them from feeling any national sentiment of unity.¹ The tribe and kin group were their strongest societal units. At the time of Mohammed's birth blood revenge between the kin groups was so destructive that all were instinctively struggling towards devices which might supersede it. In the century preceding Mohammed's birth the nation had

been agitated by social movements in which the old was falling and the new was pushing out to acceptance and establishment.

" It seemed as if the persons were too big for the circumstances." ²

If a tribe ever was a peace group amongst the Arabs, we have no proof of it. Islam was an attempt to unite the whole nation into a peace group by religion. The attempt succeeded, and the nation, in the plan of its new unity and energy, set out to conquer its neighbors. It had no state organization. The caliph was

¹ Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten* III, 182. ² Ibid., 196.